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ABSTRACT

The document reports on a 1979 national survey on special education certification practices for educators of the handicapped and gifted. The survey focused on such issues as categorical versus generic certification: special education requirements for regular educators: competency based certification: and certification for paraprofessionals, preschool teachers, teachers of the gifted, related services personnel, and others. Among the findings were that of the 18 states requiring special courses for regular teachers, seven have added the requirement since 1978: that since 1978, three additional states now offer special education paraprofessional certification, which is being considered by two more states: and that in addition to approved university programs, other bases for certification include individually required courses, proof of acquired competencies, statewide tests for teachers, or combinations of these requirements. (DLS)

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# SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION PRACTICES

A Summary of a National Survey
December 1979

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PREFACE

There is much activity across the country in the area of certification, yet little or no current information exists describing trends from a national perspective. This paper attempts to fill that gap. It reports what states are doing with respect to many of the certification issues relevant today: categorical v. generic certification, special education requirements for regular educators, competency based certification, certification for paraprofessionals, preschool teachers, teachers of the gifted, related services personnel and others.

Yet, this work is only a beginning. An examination of the relationship between certification decisions and the delivery of services to children does not exist. Nor are there known to be comprehensive guidelines which will answer the certification questions policy makers must face. What are the problems in education today that certification changes are supposed to address? How do decisions about certification impact on the education of exceptional students?

For example, nineteen (19) states currently require special education course work for all teachers wishing to be certified in elementary and secondary education. Often this requirement is expressed in terms of credit hours needed. Should the course objectives and competencies be specified? Is a separate course(s) needed or can knowledge and skills be gained in other ways, such as through practicum experience or in-service training? On the other hand, some states now require special educators to meet all the requirements for a general education certificate and then specialize. What should be the relationship between regular and special education preparation? Is a course in teaching reading appropriate for one group but not the other? These are only a few of the questions yet to be addressed.

This data is presented with the hope that critical attention will be drawn to state activity in certification so that the broader issues which have not been examined here will be raised and resolved.

Josephine Barresi

# SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION PRACTICES

## INTRODUCTION

The Policy Research Center of The Council for Exceptional Children has completed this survey of certification practices of the fifty states and the District of Columbia for the Policy Options Project. The survey was undertaken in response to requests for information regarding trends in certification of personnel serving special education students. The data were collected to provide both a state-by-state and an aggregated picture of current state activity with particular emphasis on identifying personnel certified or licensed, the relationship between special education and regular education training, the basis for certification, and the certification model used by each state.

It is not the purpose of this survey to report specific certification requirements of states. The survey sought and obtained information on existing state certification practices as well as those being developed and considered.

## METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

This survey originated in October, 1978, with a questionnaire being sent to the State Director of Teacher Education and Certification in each of the fifty states and the District of Columbia. Data from the questionnaires and the certification requirements of the states in the Policy Research Center files were compiled for each state. In December, 1979, the survey was expanded to obtain additional pertinent information. This expanded survey was sent to each State Director of Teacher Education and Certification along with a copy of last year's response for confirmation of data and current changes. The data were compiled in a profile for each state and aggregated for the nation (see appendix). This year's data were then compared with the 1978 information to determine trends in special education certification practices.

## SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY

### Regular Education Certification Requirements and Practices

The intent of this area of the survey was to determine what, if any, special education background is required for regular education personnel. Requirements are specified for teachers, principals, and physical education teachers in some states. Separate certification is offered for preschool and adult education teachers in a number of states (see Table 1).

The changes which have occurred between the 1978 and 1979 surveys suggest a high degree of activity in the area of certification. In addition, a number of states have initiated task forces or surveys to gather similar data and/or input for future certification policy revisions (e.g., Maryland, Texas).

A comparison of the 1978 and 1979 surveys indicates the following changes in special education requirements for regular education teachers:

- Of the 18 states requiring special courses for regular education teachers, seven have added the requirement since 1978. Of the six states now considering this as a requirements, four have been added since the 1978 survey;
- Three states have been added to those with requirements for principals (one addition, one being considered, one being developed). There are now four states which require principals to have a special education background;
- Four states have been added for the total of 15 states with special education course requirements for P.E. teachers. Two of the three states considering requirements are additions and one additional state is developing regulations;
- One additional state offers regular preschool certification; and
- Two additional states offer regular adult education certification, and one state is developing adult education certification.

Table 1

REGULAR EDUCATION CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES

| | Number of States | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Required | Being Considered | Being Developed | Have Knowledge[6] |
| Special Education course(s) required for all teacher certification | 19[1] | 6 | | 7 |
| Special Education background required for all principals | 5[2][3] | 2 | | 3 |
| Special Education courses required for all P.E. teachers | 15 | 3 | | 2 |
| State offers: | | | | |
| Preschool certification | 28[4] | 1 | | |
| Adult Ed. certification | 19[5] | 1 | | |

(1) Massachusetts - effective prior to 1982.
(2) Louisiana - special education principals only.
(3) Massachusetts - effective prior to 1982.
(4) Georgia - kindergarten.
(5) Massachusetts - effective prior to 1982.
(6) While a separate course(s) is not required, all teachers are expected to have some knowledge, information, or experience in special education.

Special Education Certification Practices

This section of the survey includes the various types of certification available to special education personnel and whether regular education requirements are a prerequisite for obtaining special education certification. It also attempts to assess the degree of overlap in requirements by determining whether special education is freestanding or an endorsement to regular education certification. There is no difference in the number of states offering freestanding certification for special education or issuing it as an endorsement to regular education certification. Thirty-four states treat special education certification as freestanding and 34 treat it as an endorsement. Seventeen states offer both types of certification (see Table 2).

Table 2

SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION PRACTICES

| | Practice | Number of States Being Considered | Being Developed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Special Education certification is freestanding | 34(1,2) | 1 | |
| Special Education certification is endorsement to regular education | 34(3) | | |
| State offers both types of certification | 17 | | |
| Elementary or Secondary certification eligibility required for Special Education teachers | 21 | | |
| State offers certification for: | | | |
| Resource Teacher | 18 | | |
| Gifted & Talented Teacher | 12 | 2 | |
| Sp.Ed. Preschool Teacher | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| Sp.Ed. Adult Ed. Teacher | 1 | | |
| Sp.Ed. Paraprofessional | 6 | 2 | |

(1) Arkansas - effective 1984.
(2) Kansas - director only.
(3) New Mexico - effective 1982.

While significant changes are not shown in state use of freestanding or endorsement certification, the following categories of special education certification show several changes:

- Utah is developing certification for Special Education Resource teachers;
- Three additional states (Alaska, Georgia, Maryland) offer certification for Gifted and Talented teachers, and certification for

this category is being considered by two states (Arizona and Arkansas). Ohio is developing certification for teachers of Gifted and Talented students;

- Special Education Preschool certification is being offered by two additional states. Two states are developing this type of certification and it is being considered by four states, three of them additions since 1978; and
- Three additional states now offer Special Education paraprofessional certification, and it is being considered by two more states.

Related Services Personnel Certification/Licensing Practices

The number of states offering or requiring certification or licensure of related services personnel is shown in Table 3. All but a few states require certification or licensing of School Psychologists, Counselors, and Speech and Hearing Audiologists. More than half the states have requirements for Social Workers. Close to half the states have requirements for Occupational Therapists, School Nurses, and Physical Therapists. Sixteen states have requirements for Psychometrists/Educational Diagnosticians, and only four states have requirements for Peripatology.

Missouri does not certify any related services personnel and three states offer limited certification in this area (Oklahoma - Psychologist only; North Dakota - Speech/Hearing Audiologist only; Oregon - Psychologist and Counselor only). It is not known whether these states require an alternative to certification or licensing.

Further discussion of this area can be found in another Policy Options Project paper (Barresi, 1980).

Table 3

RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL REQUIRING
CERTIFICATION OR LICENSING

| | Number of States | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Required | Being Considered | Being Developed |
| Social Worker | 35 | 2 | |
| School Psychologist | 45 | | |
| Occupational Therapist | 21 | 2 | |
| Counselor | 44 | | |
| School Nurse | 26 | 4 | |
| Speech and/or Hearing Audiologist | 43 | | |
| Psychometrist/Educational Diagnostician | 16 | | |
| Peripatology | 4 | | |
| Physical Therapist | 23 | 2 | |

Basis for Certification

This area was designed to pinpoint a State Education Agency's method of determining a candidate's qualifications for certification.

While all but one state indicates that certification is based upon approved university programs, other bases for certification include individually required courses, proof of acquired competencies, statewide tests for teachers or combinations of these requirements (see Table 4). Vermont noted that the basis for certification was approved institution programs rather than university programs. Kansas requires individual courses for special education principals. West Virginia requires proof of competencies for out of state applicants.

Table 4

BASIS FOR CERTIFICATION

| | Number of States | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Required | Being Considered | Being Developed |
| Based on approved university programs | 50 | | |
| Based on approved institution programs | 1 | | |
| Based on individually required courses | 22 | | |
| Based on proof of acquired competencies | 14 | 1 | 2 |
| Statewide test for teachers required | 9 | 1 | 1 |

The highest degree of activity as a basis for certification has been in the area of statewide testing for teachers. Two states have added this as a requirement, and this requirement is being developed by one state and is being considered by one state.

Proof of competencies is another area which shows change with two states developing and one state considering this as a basis for certification.

Certification Model for State

The models listed in Special Education Certification: A State of the Art Survey, prepared by Joseph T. Gilmore and Nicholas S. Argyros in 1977, were used to determine the current models in use in the states. The categorical model includes six or more handicapping conditions. States which offer less than six categorical certificates are included in the generic model. California,

Massachusetts, and Washington are listed in the "Other" model category as they do not use either of the two previous models. California offers four categories of endorsement for specialist instructor, and Massachusetts uses five categories, two sensory and three classified by severity. Washington uses no categories (see Table 5).

Hawaii is the only state that reported using both models. However, it should be noted that of the states included as using a categorical model, it would appear that three states offer a generic type certificate as one of the categorical certificates available. For instance, Kentucky includes mildly handicapped students in a generic category called "Learning and Behavior Disorders." Tennessee includes Learning Disabled, Mentally Retarded, Emotionally Disturbed, Socially Maladjusted, Gifted, and Crippling and Special Health Problems in a certificate with generic characteristics called Special Education. New Mexico offers a General Special Education certificate.

Changes in certification model have been minimal. Arkansas has approved a generic model to be effective in 1984, and Utah is developing a generic model. West Virginia is considering a model other than the categorical or generic models.

Table 5

CERTIFICATION MODELS

| | Model Used | Number of States Being Considered | Being Developed |
|---|---|---|---|
| Categorical Model | 35 | | |
| Generic Model | 14 | | 1 |
| Other | 3 | 1 | |

It should be noted that in Massachusetts a task force has a proposal before the State Board which indicates revisions in several areas of special education certification.

A report of the Certification Task Force dated July 6, 1979, proposes:

- Generic certification of principals responsible for making decisions regarding handicapped children;
- Consideration of certification of aides;
- Consideration of certification of related services personnel;
- Interim in-service training of related services personnel to include:
    a. Orientation to and implications of handicapped conditions;
    b. Instructional methodology and management techniques for working with handicapped; and
    c. General information such as placement and development and implementation of IEP's.
- A certification model that offers a generic certificate by age cluster and special endorsements for Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired and Severely/Profoundly Handicapped.

A number of states are moving in the direction of requiring regular education personnel to become trained or have knowledge of special education students characteristics and needs.

Special educators are being offered the opportunity to obtain certification in additional categories such as Gifted and Talented and Special Education Preschool. In some states certification is being offered which will qualify a teacher to work with students with similar program needs rather than those with a like exceptionality. The trend appears to be one of strengthening the services received by those with special educational needs through the development of improved certification standards.

## REFERENCES


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APPENDIX

## SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION SURVEY

Data Collected by the Policy Research Center of
The Council for Exceptional Children
1979

| | AL | AK | AZ | AR | CA | CO | CT | DE | FL | GA | HI | ID | IL | IN | IA | KS | KY | LA | ME | MD | MA | MI | MN | MS | MO |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **REGULAR EDUCATION CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed courses required for all teacher certification | X | | | C | X | X | | | | X | | | X81 | K | C | X | X | X | | C | X82 | C | | X | X |
| Spec. Ed. background required for all principals | | | | C | X | X | | | | X | | | | | | | K | S | | C | X82 | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. courses required for P.E. teachers | X | | | C | X | K | | | X | X | | | X81 | | C | | | X | | C | X82 | | | | |
| State offers: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preschool certification | X | X | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | D | | | X | | X | X | X |
| Adult Ed. certification | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | | X | D | | | X82 | | | X | X |
| **SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. Certificate is freestanding | X | X | X | 1984 | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | 5 | | | X | C | | | | X | X |
| Spec. Ed. certificate is endorsement to Reg. Ed. | | X | | X | X | 2 | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Elem. or Sec. certification eligibility required for Spec. Ed. teachers | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | X | | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | | |
| State offers certification for: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resource teacher | | | | | | X | | | | | | | X | | X | X | X | | | | X | | | | X |
| Gifted and Talented teacher | X | X | C | C | X | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | | X | |
| Spec. Ed. preschool teacher | X | | C | | X | X | | | | | | | | | X | D | | | | | X | | C | | |
| Spec. Ed. Adult Ed. teacher | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. paraprofessional | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | C | X | | | X | C | | | | | |
| **RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION/LICENSING REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| State requires certification or licensing for: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Worker | X | X | C | C | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | | |
| School Psychologist | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Occupational Therapist | X | X | C | | X | X | | X | X | | | | X | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | | |
| Counselor | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| School Nurse | | X | C | C | X | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| Speech and/or Hearing Audiologist | X | X | X | 1 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | |
| Psychometrist/Educational Diagnostician | X | X | X | | | | | X | | X | X4 | X | | X | | | X | | | | | | | X | |
| Peripatology | X | | | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Therapist | X | X | C | | X | X | | X | X | | | | X | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | | |
| **BASIS FOR CERTIFICATION** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Based on approved university programs | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Based on individually required courses | | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X | | X | S | | | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| Based on proof of acquired competencies | | | C/D | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | X82 | | | | X |
| Statewide test for teachers required | | | C | X | X | | | | D | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | |
| **CERTIFICATION MODEL FOR STATE** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Categorical - Six or more handicapping conditions | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Generic - Less than six handicapping conditions | | | | 1984 | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | |

Key: C - being considered
K - have knowledge, information, experience, etc.
D - being developed
S - Spec. Ed. principals only

1 - Arizona reported consideration of certification in this area has been tabled
2 - Endorsement for Early Childhood only
3 - Certified or civil service employed
4 - Certified or civil service employed
5 - Freestanding for director

## SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION SURVEY

Data Collected by the Policy Research Center of
The Council for Exceptional Children
1979

| | MT | NE | NV | NH | NJ | NM | NY | NC | ND | OH | OK | OR | PA | RI | SC | SD | TN | TX | UT | VT | VA | WA | WV | WI | WY | DC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **REGULAR EDUCATION CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. courses required for all teacher certification | C | K | X | C | | | | X | | | X | X | | | | | X | XK | K | | K | K | K | 7/81 | X | |
| Spec. Ed. background required for all principals | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | K | K | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. courses required for P.E. teachers | | X | X | | | | | X | | X | | X | | | | | X | | | | X | | K | 7/81 | | |
| State offers: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preschool certification | | | | X | | | | | X | | | X | X | | | X | | X | X | | X | | X | X | | X |
| Adult Ed. certification | | | | | | X | X | | | X7 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | 15 | | X |
| **SPECIAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. certificate is freestanding | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X8 | | | X | X | X | X11 | | X | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| Spec. Ed. certificate is endorsement to Reg. Ed. | X | X | X | | X | X82 | | X | X | | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | |
| Elem. or Sec. certification eligibility required for Spec. Ed. teachers | X | X | | | | | | | X | X9 | | X | | X | | X | | X | | | X | | XK | | X | |
| State offers certification for: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resource teacher | X | X | | | | X | X | | X | | | X | X | X | | X | | | D | X | | | | | | A |
| Gifted and Talented teacher | | X | | | | X | | X | X | D | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |
| Spec. Ed. preschool teacher | | D | | | | | | | X | C | | | | X | | | | X | | | X | | C | X | | |
| Spec. Ed. Adult Ed. teacher | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Spec. Ed. paraprofessional | | | | | 6 | X | | | | 10 | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | X | | |
| **RELATED SERVICES PERSONNEL CERTIFICATION/LICENSING REQUIREMENTS** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| State requires certification or licensing for: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Worker | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| School Psychologist | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | D | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Occupational Therapist | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | | X | | | | | | | | X | | | X | X | C | X | | |
| Counselor | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| School Nurse | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | | X | X | C | 12 | | X | | X | | X | C | | X | |
| Speech and/or Hearing Audiologist | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Psychometrist/Educational Diagnostician | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | X | X |
| Peripatology | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Physical Therapist | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | | X | | | | X | | | | X | | | X | X | C | X | | |
| **BASIS FOR CERTIFICATION** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Based on approved university programs | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 13 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Based on individually required courses | | | X | | X | X | X | | | X | | | | | X | | | X | | | X | | 14 | | X | X |
| Based on proof of acquired competencies | | X | | X | | | | X | | | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | X | | | |
| Statewide test for teachers required | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | | X | |
| **CERTIFICATION MODEL FOR STATE** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Categorical - Six or more handicapping conditions | | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | | | | | X | | X | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Generic - Less than six handicapping conditions | X | | | | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | D | X | | | | | | |
| Other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | C | | | |

6 - Approval
7 - Vocational
8 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist only
9 - LD, E.D., EMR, Orthopedically Handicapped and Visually Handicapped
10 - Permit
11 - Freestanding for severe/Profound only
12 - Certification available but not mandatory
13 - Based on approved institution programs
14 - For out-of-state applicants
15 - Yes from Voc. Board, No from DPI